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UNCLAS ROME 002080

SIPDIS

C O R R E C T E D - COPY (ADDED PARIS TO ADDRESSEE LINE)

PARIS FOR NSF REP SCHINDEL
DEPT FOR OES/STC AND STAS, EUR/WE
WHITE HOUSE FOR OSTP
USDOC FOR TA MILLICK

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [TSPL](#) [KSCA](#) [TBIO](#) [TPHY](#) [IT](#)

SUBJECT: RESEARCH REFORM GOES AHEAD AND CNR PRESIDENT
RESIGNS

1. ON MAY 13, LUCIO BIANCO, PRESIDENT OF THE NATIONAL RESEARCH COUNCIL (CNR) RESIGNED. DURING A PRESS CONFERENCE, BIANCO UNDERLINED THAT HE DECIDED TO QUIT "AFTER MANY MONTHS OF CONFRONTATIONS WITH RESEARCH AND UNIVERSITY MINISTER LETIZIA MORATTI AND HER RESEARCH REFORM PROPOSAL". IN A "OPEN LETTER" TO THE RESEARCHERS, HE STATED THAT "THE CURRENT GOVERNMENT DENIES THE IMPORTANCE OF BASIC RESEARCH AND SUPPORTS ONLY APPLIED RESEARCH". HOWEVER, THE LETTER DOES NOT DEFEND THE RESEARCHERS, WHO DID NOT REACT PROMPTLY AND ACTIVELY AGAINST THE RESEARCH REFORM AND THUS "WILL BE CO-RESPONSIBLE OF THE DISMANTLMENT OF A RESEARCH SYSTEM, WHICH IS STRUCTURALLY WEAK BUT STILL COMPETITIVE CONSIDERING THE FUNDS".

2. BIANCO BECAME CNR PRESIDENT ON APRIL 30, 1997 AND WAS REELECTED IN MAY 2001. HE HAD STARTED HIS CAREER AS CNR RESEARCHER IN 1970. BIANCO DECIDED TO RESIGN WHEN HE LEARNT THAT THE RESEARCH REFORM PROPOSAL HAD BEEN SUPPORTED BY THE TECHNICAL ADVISORS OF THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS AND THUS WOULD HAVE BEEN DEFINITELY APPROVED VERY SOON. PROF. ADRIANO DE MAJO, CURRENT RECTOR OF LUISS, A ROME-BASED PRIVATE UNIVERSITY, WILL BE APPOINTED AS CNR COMMISSIONER TO OVERSEE THE REFORM (SEPTEL). SEMBLER

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